

Message Text

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R 090830Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9776

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SANAA

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 JIDDA 0169

EXDIS

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

E.O.: 11652: GDS

TAGS: XF, SA, PFOR, ENRG, US

SUBJ: FOREIGN POLICY PROSPECTS FOR 1975 - SAUDI ARABIA
AND THE NEAR EAST

REF : TEL AVIV 7498

SUMMARY: WE HAVE BEEN STRUCK BY THE GROWING PESSIMISM IN
ISRAEL AND IN AMERICAN JEWISH CIRCLES. IT SEEMS TO BE
BASED ON THE AXIOM THAT ISRAEL CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO
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RELINQUISH ANY MORE OF THE ARAB LANDS IT CONQUERED IN

1967 WITHOUT ARAB GUARANTEES OF SECURITY FOR ISRAEL, THE COLLORARY THAT THE ARABS WILL NEVER GIVE SUCH GUARANTEES AND THE CONCLUSION THAT ANOTHER WAR IS THEREFORE INEVITABLE. WE ARE NOT SURE HOW DISINGENUOUS THIS IS. ISRAEL MAY BE USING THE ARGUMENT MERELY AS AN EXCUSE TO RETAIN ITS EXPANDED BORDERS. BUT IF ISREAL IS SINCERE IT SHOULD AT LEAST TEST THE ARABS. WE ARE CONVINCED THAT THE ARABS - AT LEAST THOSE IN THE KINGDOM - WOULD BE WILLING TO CONCLUDE PEACE BASED ON THE 1967 BORDERS WITH A SPECIAL STATUS FOR JERUSALEM AND WITH STRONG PROVISIONS FOR ISRAEL'S SECURITY. WE ARE EQUALLY CONVINCED THAT THERE WILL BE ANOTHER WAR ACCOMPANIED BY ANOTHER OIL BOYCOTT OR PRODUCTION LOSS IF ISREAL DOES NOT QUICKLY RESPOND TO THE NEW VERY LIKELY TEMPORARY ARAB MODERATION. END SUMMARY.

1. ISRAELI AND FOREIGN NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS COMBINED WITH EMBASSY TEL AVIV'S EXCELLENT REPORTING - PARTICULARLY ITS 7498 OF DEC 30, 1974 - DESCRIBE IN CONSIDERABLE DETAIL THE DEEP PESSIMISM WHICH PERVADES THE ISRAELI PUBLIC. THIS ATTITUDE PRECEDES OR PERHAPS SPRINGS FROM A SIMILAR ATTITUDE IN THE AMERICAN-JEWISH COMMUNITY, IF THE NEWS REPORTS FROM THE STATES WE RECEIVE ARE ACCURATE. WE WERE PARTICULARLY STRUCK BY THE ARTICLE IN THE SATURDAY DEC 28 "NEW YORK TIMES" BY ELIE WIESEL ENTITLED "OMINOUS SIGNS AND UNSPEAKABLE THOUGHTS." MR. WIESEL REFERS TO THE HOLOCAUST AND CONCLUDES THAT IT IS ABOUT TO BE REPEATED IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND PERHAPS ELSEWHERE; "I REMEMBER," HE SAYS, "AND I AM AFRAID." THE ARTICLE IS ACCOMPANIED BY AN ARAB BLOWING OUT THE LIGHTS (IN THE SHAPE OF SKULLS) OF A MENORAH.

2. THERE HAVE CERTAINLY BEEN DISTURBING SIGNS COMING FROM THE ARABS IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS, BUT THERE IS ALSO ROOM FOR A MORE POSITIVE INTERPRETATION OF THEIR ACTIONS AND STATEMENTS THAN IS GENERALLY MADE IN ISRAEL OR THE WEST. THERE IS EVEN ROOM FOR MODERATE OPTIMISM.

3. SAUDI ARABIA, IN A LITERAL SENSE, IS NOT AS INVOLVED IN THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT AS THE STATES IMMEDIATELY

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BORDERING ISREAL, BUT ITS POSITION IN WORLD ENERGY SUPPLY AND FINANCE CONSITITUATES THE STRONGEST WEAPON THE ARABS HAVE. SAUDI ARABIA WILLHFINANCE THE WAR EFFORTS OF THE CONFRONTATION STATES AND KING FAISAL AND HIS GOVERNMENT HAVE EXTREMELY STRONG VIEWS ON PALESTINE. NEVERTHELESS, VIEWED FROM HERE, THE ISRAELI PESSIMISM SEEMS LARGELY IF NOT ENTIRELY UNWARRANTED. IT SEEMS BASED ON AN EXTRA-ORDINARY LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT HAPPENED IN THE

ARAB WORLD IN THE LAST YEAR AND A HALF. RATHER THAN GIRDING THEIR LOINS FOR THE FIFTH, SIXTH, SEVENTH, ISRAELI-ARAB WARS, THE ISRAELIS MIGHT EXAMINE MORE CAREFULLY THAN THEY SEEM TO HAVE DONE SO FAR THE ALTERNATIVE OF A PEACEFUL ACCOMMODATION WITH THE ARABS.

4. THE ARAB DECISION IN ALGIERS TO GIVE DE FACTO RECOGNITION TO ISRAEL IN ITS 1967 BORDERS WAS PERHAPS A MISTAKE. TO ANNOUNCE, BEFORE NEGOTIATIONS START, WHAT IS YOUR FINAL POSITION IS USUALLY NOT A GOOD BARGAINING TACTIC. IT DID GIVE THE ISRAELIS, HOWEVER, ALMOST EVERYTHING THEY HAVE ASKED FOR SINCE 1948. THE ARABS NOW SEEM TO BE SEEING THIS ERROR AND ARE BEGINNING TO TALK ABOUT THE 1947 UN PARTITION PLAN AS THE BASIS FOR NEGOTIATIONS. WE DO NOT THINK THIS NEED TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY.

5. BEFORE TALKING ABOUT EXTERMINATION, AND BEFORE ALLOWING EITHER THE MASADA OR THE SAMPSON COMPLEX TO PROGRESS TO OBSESSION, THE ISRAELIS MIGHT USEFULLY EXAMINE THEIR OWN POSITION AND THAT OF THE ARABS. IF THE ISRAELIS WANT PEACE ON THE BASIS OF THEIR PRESENT OCCUPATION OF ARAB LANDS OR IF THEY ARE CONSIDERING EXPANDING THEIR BORDERS (AS MOST ARABS ARE CONVINCED THAT THEY ARE) UP TO THE GENEROUS BOUNDARIES OF ERETZ ISREAL AS DEFINED BY THE FIRST ZIONISTS, THEN ISREAL MUST INDEED PREPARE FOR WAR. BUT IF SUCH IS THE CASE, THE ATMOSPHERE IN ISREAL SHOULD MORE PROPERLY BE ONE OF DEFIANCE AND CONFIDENCE, NOT OF IMPENDING DOOM. (THE RECENT ISRAELI STATEMENTS ABOUT THE "INTOLERABLE" CHAOS IN SOUTH LEBANON AND THE INABILITY OF BEIRUT TO GOVERN ITS SOUTHERN PROVINCES ARE PROOF, IN ARAB EYES, OF ISRAEL'S INTENTION TO EXPAND INTO LEBANON.)

6. THE ISRAELI POSITION, AS DESCRIBED IN THE AMERICAN PRESS,
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IS INVARIABLY THAT ISRAEL WOULD NOT MAKE TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS - CERTAINLY WOULD NOT WITHDRAW TO THE 1967 BORDERS - UNLESS THERE WERE SOLID GUARANTEES OF ITS SECURITY - A POSITION FEW IN THE WEST WOULD DISPUTE. BUT THEN THE UNTESTED AND WE BELIEVE ERRONEOUS ASSUMPTION IS MADE THAT THE ARABS WOULD NEVER GIVE THESE ASSURANCES. ISRAEL THEREFORE MUST HOLD THE ARAB TERRITORIES. THE STATEMENTS OUT OF ISRAEL ITSELF, AT LEAST IN THE REPORTS WE RECEIVE HERE, SEEM EVEN LESS REASONABLE, BUT PERHAPS WE HAVE MISSED SOMETHING. IN ANY CASE, NO ONE IN THE WEST AND NO RESPONSIBLE ARAB LEADER, INCLUDING FAISAL, WOULD EXPECT ISRAEL TO WITHDRAW FULLY WITHOUT NEGOTIATING ARRANGEMENTS FOR ITS SECURITY. WE HOPE THAT ISRAEL WOULD CONCENTRATE ON ACHIEVING SUCH ARRANGEMENTS RATHER THAN PREPARING FOR WAR IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS.

7. IF ISRAEL WERE PREPARED TO ACCEPT THE ARAB PROPOSITION AND RETURN TO THE 1967 BORDERS AND SIMULTANEOUSLY WERE ASSURED THAT THIS WITHDRAWAL WOULD BE EXPECTED ONLY IF THERE WERE GUARANTEES OF ITS SECURITY, WE HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THE ARABS - AT LEAST THOSE HERE - WOULD BE WILLING TO GIVE THEM ALMOST ANYTHING THEY COULD ASK. A U.S.-ISRAELI MUTUAL ASSISTANCE PACT, UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, EVEN IF IT INCLUDED AMERICAN TROOPS IN ISRAEL, WOULD NOT DISRUPT OUR RELATIONS WITH SAUDI ARABIA FOR LONG OR FOR GOOD. THE SAUDIS, AND WE ASSUME OTHER ARABS, COULD ACCEPT, ALBEIT AFTER AGONIZED DEBATE, THE TOTAL DEMILITARIZATION OF THE WEST BANK, GAZA, GOLAN SINAI. EVEN MULTI-YEAR ISRAELI LEASES ON SHARM AL-SHAikh AND OTHER MILITARY STRONGPOINTS MIGHT BE NEGOTIABLE.

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EXDIS

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

8. THE PROBLEM OF JERUSALEM, WITHOUT A DOUBT WILL BE THE MOST DIFFICULT ASPECT BUT, IN OUR OPINION, IS NOT INSOLUBLE. KING FAISAL HAS REPEATEDLY SAID THE ONLY SOLUTION FOR THE CITY IS A RETURN TO THE STATUS QUO ANTE. WE BELIEVE HOWEVER THAT IF THE PALESTINIANS AND ISRAELIS ACCEPTED AN INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE CITY OR, PERHAPS MORE EASILY, A UNIFIED, BINATIONAL CITY AS THE CAPITAL OF BOTH ISRAEL AND PALESTINE, FAISAL COULD NOT EFFECTIVELY OBJECT. SUCH AN ACCOMMODATION ON JERUSALEM WOULD, OF COURSE, ENTAIL AN ECONOMIC UNION OF ISRAEL AND THE ARAB STATE OF PALESTINE (POSSIBLY ALSO OF JORDAN) BUT
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ISRAEL, IN A SENSE, HAS THIS NOW AND WOULD BENEFIT FROM ITS FORMALIZATION. WHETHER THE SIGHT OF AN ARAB FLAG FLYING NEXT TO THE STAR OF DAVID IN JERUSALEM WOULD BE AN INTOLERABLE PSYCHOLOGICAL BURDEN FOR THE ISRAELIS IS NOT POSSIBLE TO JUDGE FROM HERE.

9. ALL REPORTS WE HAVE HEARD AND READ FROM EGYPT AND SYRIA LEAD US TO BELIEVE THAT THOSE TWO COUNTRIES STRONGLY YEARN FOR PEACE AND THAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO DEVOTE THEIR ENERGIES TO RECONSTRUCTION OF THEIR COUNTRIES. WE ARE SURE THAT LEBANON HAS EQUALLY STRONG FEELINGS. THE JORDANIAN VIEW IS LESS CLEAR; THE JORDANIANS MAY HAVE ENTERED A PERIOD OF ISOLATION AND ARE PREPARED TO LET THE OTHER ARABS TRY TO SEE WHAT THEY CAN DO IN PALESTINE. SAUDI ARABIA HAS NOT SUFFERED FROM THE WAR OR CONFRONTATION BUT IT, TOO, WOULD PREFER TO USE ITS MONEY FOR PRODUCTIVE PURPOSES; IT WOULD PREFER TO BUILD FACTORIES IN THE ARAB WORLD AND ELSEWHERE RATHER THAN SUBSIDIZING ARAB ARMIES.

10. THE ARAB LEADERS, AT LEAST THOSE HERE, ARE STILL PREPARED TO GO ALONG WITH STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TO PEACE, PROVIDED MOMENTUM CAN BE KEPT UP AND A FINAL PEACE CAN BE ACHIEVED REASONABLY QUICKLY. THE ADVOCATES OF THIS APPROACH, HOWEVER, HAVE NOT BEEN HELPED BY STATEMENTS OF RABIN AND OTHERS IN ISRAEL THAT THE NEXT WITHDRAWAL WILL BE THE LAST FOR SEVERAL YEARS AND THAT ALL THE ISRAELIS HAVE TO DO IS WAIT SIX OR SEVEN YEARS BY WHICH TIME THE ARABS' OIL TOOTH WILL HAVE BEEN DRAWN. IT THEREFORE BEHOOVES ISRAEL, THEY SEEM TO BE SAYING, TO STALL AS MUCH AS IT CAN, TO RESIST AS LONG AS IT CAN AMERICAN PRESSURE FOR MOVEMENT TOWARD ACCOMMODATION.

11. THE ARABS ARE NOT AS "PESSIMISTIC" AS THE ISRAELIS AND THEY CERTAINLY DON'T HAVE ANY SENSE OF IMPENDING EXTERMINATION BUT

THEY, TOO, ARE BEGINNING TO GET NERVOUS. THE FREQUENT ARTICLES IN THE U.S. AND ISRAELI PRESS ON THE NECESSITY OF OCCUPYING THE ARAB OIL FIELDS AND WHAT THEY CONSIDER TO BE EQUIVOCAL DENIALS OF SUCH CONTEMPLATED ACTION BY SECRETARY KISSINGER AND PRESIDENT FORD HAVE LED KING FAISAL AND OTHERS TO CONCLUDE THAT IF WAR STARTS THE UNITED STATES WILL INTERCEDE ON BEHALF OF ISRAEL. HERE THE ARABS HAVE THEIR OWN SAMPSON COMPLEX, CERTAINLY A MATCH OF ANYTHING THE ISRAELIS COULD CONTEMPLATE, I.E. THE OIL
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FIELDS WILL BE BLOWN UP AND THE ENTIRE WESTERN WORLD WILL BE BROUGHT TO A COLLAPSE. THAT THE ARABS WOULD BE SERIOUSLY HURT BY SUCH ACTION IS SOMETHING THEY UNDERSTAND. HOWEVER, ALMOST ALL ARABS - IN THE KINGDOM AT LEAST - ALSO BELIEVE THAT JAPAN AND THE EUROPEANS WILL ENSURE THAT UNITED STATES DOES NOT GO TO ANY SUCH EXTREME MERELY TO PROTECT ISRAELI CONQUESTS. THEY ARE QUITE SURE THAT NEITHER EUROPE OR JAPAN WOULD BE WILLING TO SEE THEIR ECONOMIES RUINED, MERELY TO KEEP THE ISRAELIS IN GOLAN AND ON THE WEST BANK.

12. SOME ARABS SEEM TO FAVOR THE RECONVENING OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE WHERE THE SOVIET UNION CAN PLAY A GREATER ROLE. THE SAUDIS DON'TV NOR FOR THAT MATTER SHOULD ANY ARAB GOVERNMENT. THE ISRAELIS MIGHT WANT THE RUSSIANS AROUND TO PUT COUNTER-PRESSURES ON THE ARABS, BUT THE RUSSIANS ARE IN NO POSITION TO MOVE ISRAEL EXCEPT POSSIBLY THROUGH PROMISED CHANGES IN ITS IMMIGRATION POLICY - BUT THIS WOULD ALIENATE THE ARABS. THE SAUDIS RECOGNIZE, AND MOST OTHER ARABS PROBABLY DO TOO, THE TRUTH OF SECRETARY KISSINGER'S REPEATED STATEMENTS THAT ONLY THE UNITED STATES IS IN A POSITION TO BRING THEM PEACE; THAT ONLY THE UNITED STATES CAN PERSUADE ISRAEL TO WITHDRAW FROM ARAB LANDS.

13. AS NOTED EARLIER, THE SAUDIS WILL NOT CAUSE ANY PROBLEMS WITH A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TOWARD PEACE - AT LEAST THEY WOULD NOT IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. BUT THEY WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY SOON DEMAND THAT THIS BE COUPLED WITH SOME STATEMENT BY THE UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL OF THEIR OBJECTIVES. THESE WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY HAVE TO INCLUDE A DEMILITARIZED PALESTINIAN STATE ON THE WEST BANK, BAZA, AND PARTS OF SINAI, IF EGYPT COULD BE PERSUADED TO RELINQUISH THEM. SUCH A STATEMENT WOULD ENSURE SAUDI COOPERATION IN THE SUBSEQUENT NEGOTIATIONS EVEN IF THE SCHEDULE OF ISRAELI WITHDRAWALS WOULD TAKE A LONG TIME AND EVEN IF COUPLED, AS THEY WOULD HAVE TO BE, WITH U.S. DECLARATIONS ON THE NECESSITY TO PROTECT ISRAEL'S BORDERS. THE PALESTINIANS MIGHT CONSIDER A DEMILITARIZED STATE AS HUMILIATING OR DETRACTING FROM THEIR SOVEREIGNTY, BUT IT IS UNLIKELY THEY WOULD GET MUCH SYMPATHY OR HELP FROM THE SAUDIS IF THEY TRIED TO SPOIL A SETTLEMENT. IF THEY AGREED THEY COULD EXPECT MASSIVE SAUDI FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO MAKE THEIR TINY NEW STATE VIABLE. JORDAN AND ISRAEL WOULD BENE-

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14. HOW MUCH LONGER THE ARABS WILL RETAIN THEIR MODERATION IS OPEN TO QUESTION. IF THEY BECOME CONVINCED THEIR RELATIVE POSITION HAS ALTERED SIGNIFICANTLY FOR THE BETTER OR IF THEY CONCLUDE THEY WOULD HAVE THE BACKING OF EUROPE, JAPAN AND THE COMMUNIST COUNTRIES IN FUTURE BATTLES, THEY WOULD PROBABLY ALSO CONCLUDE THAT THEIR EARLIER DESIGN (AND PROBABLY STILL THEIR CURRENT DESIRE) OF THE ELIMINATION OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL IS ATTAINABLE NOW -THROUGH FORCE OF ARMS - AND IF NOT NOW, THEN IN THE SIXTH WAR, OR THE SEVENTH. THEIR CURRENT MODERATION IS ALSO BASED ON THE BELIEF THAT EUROPE AND EVEN RUSSIA AS WELL AS THE UNITED STATES WOULD NOT TOLERATE THE EXTINCTION OF ISRAEL. IF THEY ALTER THIS BELIEF BEFORE PEACE IS ACHIEVED, THEN THE CHANCES OF PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST IN THIS GENERATION WILL BE ELIMINATED.

15. IT SEEMS ESSENTIAL TO US THAT ISRAEL MOVE QUICKLY TO EXPLOIT THE CURRENT ARAB ATTITUDES WHILE THEY STILL LAST. AT THE VERY MINIMUM IT SHOULD TRY TO TEST THEIR VALIDITY. IF IT DOES TRY, PEACE PERHAPS COULD BE ACHIEVED. IF ISRAEL DOES NOT MAKE THE EFFORT, IF IT JUST CONTINUES TO ASSUME THAT THE ARABS WOULD NEVER GIVE SUCH GUARANTEES OR IF IT SIMPLY PREFERS TO RETAIN ITS CONQUESTS, THEN WAR SEEMS INEVITABLE. AND A MIDDLE EAST WAR WOULD NOT ONLY ENSURE THE LOSS OF U.S. INTERESTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST BUT WOULD ALSO RISK INVOLVEMENT OF THE GREAT POWERS.
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